

Ex. 17A

P.R.E.P.A.R.E.

INDEPENDENT

LIVING

HANDBOOK

A PROGRAM OF
SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN SERVICES FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH, INC.
860 EAST RIVER PLACE, SUITE 104
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In Partnership with
**THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GREETINGS	2
WELCOME	3
WHAT IS THE PREPARE PROGRAM?	4
THINGS THE INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALIST DOES	5
ASSESSMENTS	6
SKILLS GROUPS	7
RETREATS	9
CONFERENCES	11
STIPENDS	13
ETV FUNDS	17
INDEPENDENT LIVING PLACEMENT	19
AFTERCARE	21
GROUP GUIDELINES	22
RETREAT AND CONFERENCE GUIDELINES	23
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION	25
YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION	27
YOUR GROUP SCHEDULE	28
GLOSSARY OF WORDS	29

Welcome!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you and your caregivers information about the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Program (Providing Resources, Education and Preparation to Adolescents Reaching Emancipation). This handbook tells you about program services and guidelines you need to know as you prepare for independence.

Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc. has partnered with the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services to bring this program to your neighborhood.

Adolescence is a time of finding out about yourself and where you want to go. It is a time when you go through changes in your body, mind and relationships as you grow from childhood to adulthood. It can be exciting and sometimes confusing. You are also trying to be independent and do things on your own, learn who you are and who you would like to be, deciding what you think is right and wrong, and more and more listening to people your own age for advice. Yet, you still have to lean on adults for a place to live, food and clothes and other things you might need.

Many young people get through their teenage years and become adults who can look themselves in the mirror each morning and say, "I'm okay with where I am today. I like myself and what I have decided to do with my life." That is our hope for you.

I challenge you to take advantage of this opportunity to begin preparation for your future. This is the first step in making a successful transition to becoming a productive adult.

Barry Dixon, Division Director
Independent Living Services (P.R.E.P.A.R.E.)
Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc.



WHAT'S THE P.R.E.P.A.R.E. PROGRAM?
and
WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF IT?

P.R.E.P.A.R.E. is a program designed to help you learn how to take care of yourself after you leave foster care. You will have an adult called an Independent Living (IL) Specialist who will help you learn different things you need to know about living on your own. Your IL Specialist is the person who is there for you when you have any questions about independent living.

How many times have you said, "I can take care of myself!", "I don't need anybody to help me!", "I can do it on my own!" or "They left me, so I'll show them!" It's hard to take care of yourself even when there are other people around to help you all the time. P.R.E.P.A.R.E. is a way for you to get the education, money and help with an apartment or car as you begin to be successful in your life outside of foster care.

In this handbook, you will find lots of information about the program and the ways to get what you need. We hope you will come along with us as we have fun learning how to be independent.

Your IL Specialists,

Corkellaya White-Sanders
Lawrence Clark
Joyce Nixon
Kenneth Spence
Bennie Smith
Mary Reardon
Greg Murphree
Jennifer Lewis
Debbie Christensen

WHAT ARE ALL THE THINGS YOUR INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALIST DOES?

Your IL Specialist wants to provide you resources, education and help that will prepare you to become a productive citizen when you leave the foster care system. A productive citizen means that you will be prepared emotionally, physically, spiritually, and financially to take care of yourself.

There are 8 IL Specialists and 2 Senior IL Specialists for the whole State of Mississippi. These 10 people serve the independent living needs of youth who are in foster care ages 14 through 20 years.

Your IL Specialist begins working with you by providing you with the Strengths/Needs Assessment and then creating, with your input, an IL Plan. They plan and teach your skills group twice a month. They are available to you throughout your participation in the program when you need someone to listen or just need a friend.

IL Specialists help plan and lead your retreats and youth conferences. They help plan outings/field trips that increase your awareness of the skills they teach you in group.

Your IL Specialist works with your Social Worker to make sure that you are signed up for retreats, conferences, computer camp and wildlife events. Your Specialist also makes sure that you know the day and time of your skills groups and you have a way to get to the groups.

Your IL Specialist works with your Social Worker and the State Independent Living Coordinator to make sure that you receive your stipends and your ETV funds.

WHAT ARE ASSESSMENTS AND WHY DO YOU NEED TO COMPLETE THEM?

The first assessment you will complete is the Strengths/Needs Assessment. This assessment helps decide what things you already know how to do and what things you need help with. This will help your IL Specialist complete your Independent Living Plan that you will work on while in the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Program.

You will get to take a pre-assessment before your group starts learning different ways to take care of yourself and a post-assessment after you learn the skills. That way you and your IL Specialist will know how much you learned and what else you need to know before you begin living on your own. Your Social Worker will be kept informed on how well you are doing so they know when you are ready to live independently.



SKILLS IN FINDING WHAT
YOU NEED AND GETTING
WHERE YOU NEED TO GO

SKILLS IN MAKING SURE YOU
HAVE MONEY WHEN YOU
NEED IT

SKILLS IN TALKING, LISTENING
AND HOW TO ACT

SKILLS ON MAKING DECISIONS

SKILLS GROUPS
WILL HELP YOU GET THE
INFORMATION
YOU NEED TO
LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.
YOU'LL BE LEARNING THINGS LIKE

SKILLS IN UNDERSTANDING
THE LAW

SKILLS IN TAKING CARE
OF YOURSELF

SKILLS IN FINDING
AND KEEPING A JOB

SKILLS IN KEEPING YOUR
STOMACH FULL AND YOUR
HOUSE SAFE

SKILLS IN DECIDING WHERE
AND WITH WHOM YOU WANT
TO LIVE

WHAT ARE SKILLS GROUPS?

Your IL Specialist will work with you in skills groups on independent living activities and exercises. You will be able to participate in 2 groups a month. These groups will be at least an hour and a half each. The groups will be held at places like the Department of Human Services, a group home, emergency shelter, schools, a P.R.E.P.A.R.E. office or another public place.

The areas you will be studying are:

Community Resources and Transportation
Communication Skills and Social Development
Employment
Money Management
Decision Making and Study Skills
Housing
Daily Living Skills
Youth Law Issues
Self-Care
Abstinence and Healthy Relationships
Leadership

Learning skills in each area will help you feel much better about yourself and your ability to live on your own. Even if things get tough you would know where to go and at least something you can do. You will get to enjoy a healthy snack and just spend some time getting to talk with your IL Specialist and other youth your age.

RETREATS (Life Skills Training Events)

Each year you will get to go to at least 1 retreat during the school year. You'll get to go with people who are around your same age. So, that means 14 and 15 year olds go to the same retreats and youth who are 16 to 20 years old go together.

Your MDHS social worker will tell him/her you up for the need to tell him/her you want to go. Your IL will work with your Social Worker to arrange transportation to

At the retreats you will stay from Friday to Saturday. The retreats are at parks and private camps all over the State.



worker has to sign you up for the retreats, so you can go. When you want to go, your Social Worker will work with your IL to arrange transportation to get you there.

will stay from Friday to Saturday. The retreats are at parks and private camps all over the State.

Some of the things you will learn about are:

- Leadership
- Abstinence
- Personal & Home Safety
- Making Good Choices
- Teamwork & Creativity
- Life Strategies
- Law Related Education

- Healthy Choices
- Parenting
- Sexual Responsibility
- Anger Management
- Money Management
- Cultural Diversity
- Self Discovery

You'll get to listen to people who have been where you are now and people who have become successful. You will have time to have fun, get together with friends and be a part of team building activities.

There are 2 other special kinds of retreats that happen every year.

Computer Camp

At this retreat youth are presented a laptop, printer and software they can take home. You will learn how to use different kinds of programs on the computer like Excel, Word and PowerPoint.



Wildlife Event

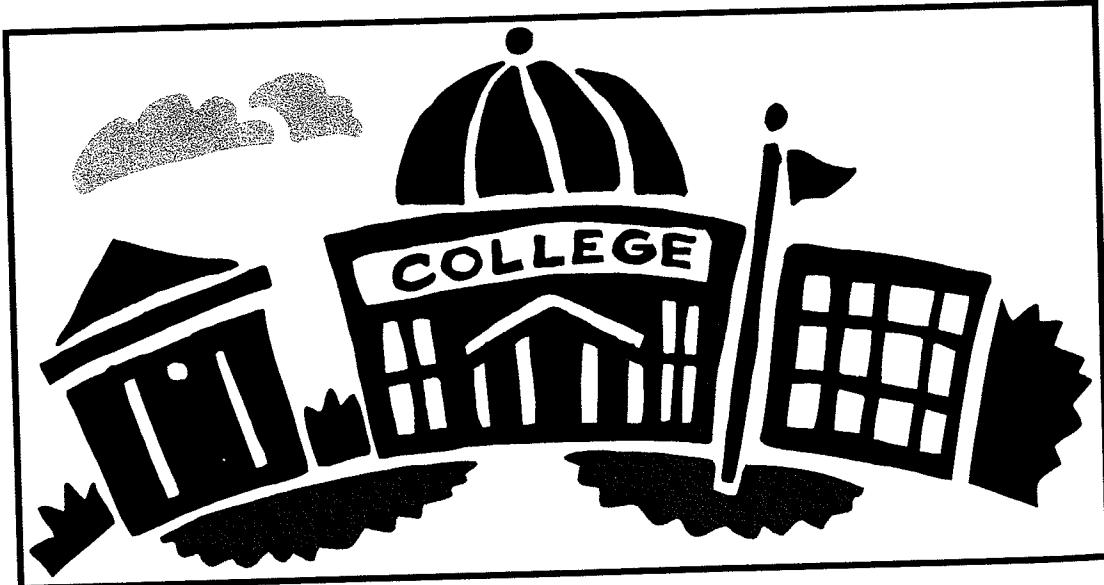
This retreat is held during the summer. You will learn about basic survival techniques while in a camp setting. There will be wildlife professionals who bring animals and share with you the do's and don'ts when dealing with animals in their surroundings. You will also learn how to fish. You will be able to take use. This retreat's theme "Give a person a fish and person to fish and they eat for their lifetime."



CONFERENCES

One Youth Conference is held each year in the summer. After you turn 16 years old you will be able to attend a Youth Conference once a year until your 21st birthday or until you leave foster care, whichever comes first. P.R.E.P.A.R.E. staff, MDHS staff and the S.A.I.L.S. members work together to make sure this is an educational, fun and exciting time for all the youth who come to the conferences.

Independent Living skills training and leadership development are some of the topics that will be discussed at these conferences. You'll hear from nationally known speakers, at times work on an independent living city, and even choose to be a part of a talent show. This conference is held at places like universities, community colleges and campgrounds.



Youth leaders who have been chosen to represent youth in foster care spend time talking in small groups about what is important to you in foster care. What you think on these issues is not only important to you but also to other children and youth who are in the Mississippi Foster Care System.

Now is the time



Today is the day!

Just imagine, three days, not only learning things that will help you when you live on your own, but getting to experience time with friends and other young people who like you, love to have fun. Remember, that as you pack your bag to attend, you can expect to enjoy the time away as you build memories.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY, MONEY...
WHAT STIPENDS WILL YOU GET
AND
HOW WILL YOU GET THEM?

MONEY

Pre-Assessment Stipend (Initial): You will get \$25.00 for finishing a Life Skills Pre-Assessment form. It will take you about 25 minutes. Your IL Specialist will let your Social Worker know you have completed it and your Social Worker will send a request for your money to the State Independent Living (IL) Coordinator.

Post-Assessment Stipend (Final): You get \$25.00 for filling out how you liked the program after you have finished. Your IL Specialist will let your Social Worker know you have finished it and your Social Worker will send a request for your money to the State IL Coordinator.

Life Skills Training Group Stipend: After you go to group for 10 hours you can get \$20.00. Your IL Specialist will let your Social Worker know you have finished the 10 hours of skills groups and the Social Worker will send a request for your money to the State IL Coordinator.

Youth Opportunity Training Stipend: After you go to 1 weekend retreat, you get \$20.00. Your IL Specialist will let your Social Worker know you have finished it and your Social Worker will send a request for your money to the State IL Coordinator.

Youth Conference Stipend: You get a \$200.00 Youth Conference Clothing Allowance before you go to the conference. When you successfully participate in all of a Youth Conference you will get \$30.00 at the end of that conference. Your IL Specialist will let your Social Worker know you have finished it and your Social Worker will send a

request for your money to the State IL Coordinator.

Newsletter Stipend: If you get your creative side going, send an article, poem or other creative writing with a letter to the editor or an editorial article to the State Independent Living Coordinator. If they use it in any MDHS publication, you will get \$15.00. You can send your submission straight to the State IL Coordinator, MDHS Placement Unit, your Social Worker or the County of Service (COS) Social Worker. Your Social Worker will ask the State to send you the money.

Senior Year Stipend: When you are a senior, a \$350.00 stipend is there for you to help you with your senior/final year expenses for receiving a diploma, GED, or a Certificate of Attendance. Your school has to provide your county with written documentation that your senior year and graduation day were within the same academic year. You will have to participate in IL Program activities. Your Social Worker has to be given a receipt for any purchases before the State will send a check to you.

High School Graduation Stipend: \$200.00 will be given to you as a graduation gift to use however you want when you graduate high school. A copy of your diploma has to be in your case record at your Social Worker's office.

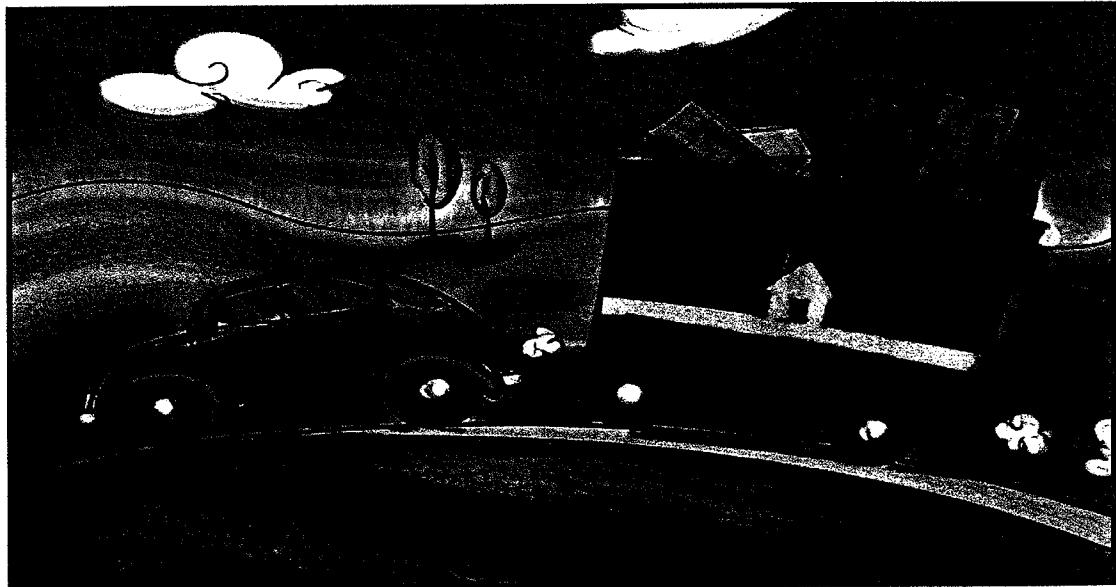
GED Certificate of Attendance Stipend: \$150.00 will be given to you when you receive a Certificate of Attendance or pass the GED. There has to be a copy of the certificate or diploma in your case record at your Social Worker's office. You can use this money any way you want.

College Bound Stipend: If you decide to go to college, you can get

\$600.00 to pay for things like a bedspread, curtains, rugs, refrigerator, microwave, trunk, bookcase, small appliances, computer, furniture items and books/resource materials. Your Social Worker has to get receipts of any purchases that were made for you before you can get a check from the State.

College Graduation Stipend: When you complete a 2-year college, 4-year college or a vocational program before you are 21 years of age, you can get \$300.00. When your Social Worker gets proof that you graduated, he/she will request that you get your money.

Start-Up Stipend: You will get \$1,000.00 to help start your life if you



leave foster care after turning 16 years of age and you participated in the available Independent Living Program activities while in care. You would have had to be in care for at least 6 months before you left to receive this stipend. You or the agency that you were placed with has to

pay for and give the State a receipt for the things you need before the State will pay. You can use this money to buy dishes, cooking utensils, appliances, linens, furniture, cleaning supplies, curtains and rugs. If you are 17 or older, you can use the money to help buy or repair a car.

Youth Trainer Stipend: If the State Independent Living Coordinator selects you to assist in different training activities, you will get \$20.00.

Aftercare Survey Stipend: When you complete and return the Aftercare Survey, you will be able to get \$25.00.

Personal Enhancement Stipend: A discretionary stipend may be awarded to you when you reach age 14 and have documented needs that include, but are not limited to, driver's education, summer school, correspondence courses, tutors, test fees, medical/dental procedures not covered under insurance or Medicaid, special trips/camps, other extra-curricular school activities or your car insurance or car repairs that are reasonable and necessary for you to attend classes or to become independent.

This stipend cannot be more than \$1,000.00 and all other sources of money have to have been explored first. You or the agency you are living with has to pay the money and send the State a receipt first and then the State will send a check.

County Conference Stipend: If you decide to participate in one of your Foster Care Review County Conferences, you will get \$25.00. If you are over 50 miles from the meeting, you can attend the conference by phone. Your Social Worker will report to the State that you participated in the meeting and request the money within 10 days of the meeting.

WHAT ARE ETV FUNDS? Educational and Training Voucher Program

The ETV Program gives people like you who have been in MDHS custody some of the money you need to go to college or a vocational program like beauty school or a welding program. You will be able to get up to \$5,000.00 a year when you graduate from high school and decide to continue your education.

You will have to be in one of the following categories to get ETV money:

1. Someone currently in the custody of MDHS.
2. Someone who left MDHS custody because they went back home or were emancipated after they turned 16 years old, but they haven't turned 21 yet. That person would have had to be in foster care for at least 6 months.
3. Someone who was adopted from MDHS custody at 16 years old and isn't 21 yet.
4. Someone in MDHS custody who graduated from high school, received a GED or a certificate of attendance.
5. Someone who got ETV money before they were 21 years old can ask for it again until they are 23.
6. Someone who applied for and has received an award letter from the place they will be going to college or a vocational program that says they will be getting a Pell Grant, MTAG, scholarships or other grants. Their IL Specialist will help their MDHS Social Worker get the paperwork they need.

You can apply for the money every October. You will have to be enrolled in a program that is considered an institution of higher education. You

will have to be in "good standing" with the program you are in. You will need to keep a grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. If there is not enough money to help everyone, you will be considered first if you are a full time student.

HOW CAN ETV FUNDS BE USED?

You'll be able to spend ETV money on tuition, other school fees, equipment and materials for school, a computer for school, a place to live while you go to school or room and board if you live on campus, internships, school-related travel, transportation needs to get to and from school, childcare while you are at school, student loans (not grants), healthcare and re-imbursement of educational needs.



HOW DO YOU GET APPROVED FOR ETV FUNDS?

Your Independent Living Specialist, your Social Worker and the State Independent Living Coordinator will work with you to help you apply for the ETV funds. There will be forms to fill out for financial aid, applications made to colleges or vocational training schools, budgets to complete and receipts to be kept. Early in your senior year or as soon as you think you will be able to pass your GED exam, talk to your Independent living Specialist about the ETV funds.

**YOU WANT YOUR OWN APARTMENT?
SO.....HOW DO YOU GET IT?
(Independent Living Placement)**

To be a part of the Independent Living Placement Program, you have to be 18 years old and meet all the requirements below.

TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PLACEMENT

1. Your apartment will be located in a place where it will be easy for you to get to school, your job and other places you will need to get to when living independently.
2. The place you want to live will meet all of MDHS' fire, sanitation and safety regulations. Your IL Specialist will help you with this.
3. You will be able to pay for it within the budget you have made.
4. You and your IL Specialist will have to ask the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board to think about it.
5. After they talk about it, the State IL Coordinator will decide whether or not you get to be a part of the program.
6. You will be able to have a roommate if you meet all of your responsibilities below.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. You will have a job and be able to pay for everything that is in your monthly budget.
2. You will continue to be actively involved in the Independent Living Program.
3. You will be able to create a monthly budget based on your income and will be able to live within your budget.

4. You will have a plan to pay for the beginning cost of the apartment.
5. You will sign and follow a contract with Southern Christian Services that gives you guidelines you will have to follow to stay in the program. If you don't follow the guidelines, you will have to leave the program.
6. You will be willing to let your MDHS Social Worker, MDHS staff, your IL Specialist and other Southern Christian Services staff make planned and unplanned visits to your home.
7. If you want to live with a roommate, your roommate will:
 - A. Be your brother or sister or another youth in MDHS custody who is the same sex as you.
 - B. Have a separate bedroom.
 - C. Be approved by the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board.
 - D. Have been approved for the Independent Living Placement Program.



DO YOU GET HELP AFTER YOU COMPLETE THE PROGRAM?

Yes you do. You will be a part of the IL Aftercare Program until your 21st birthday.

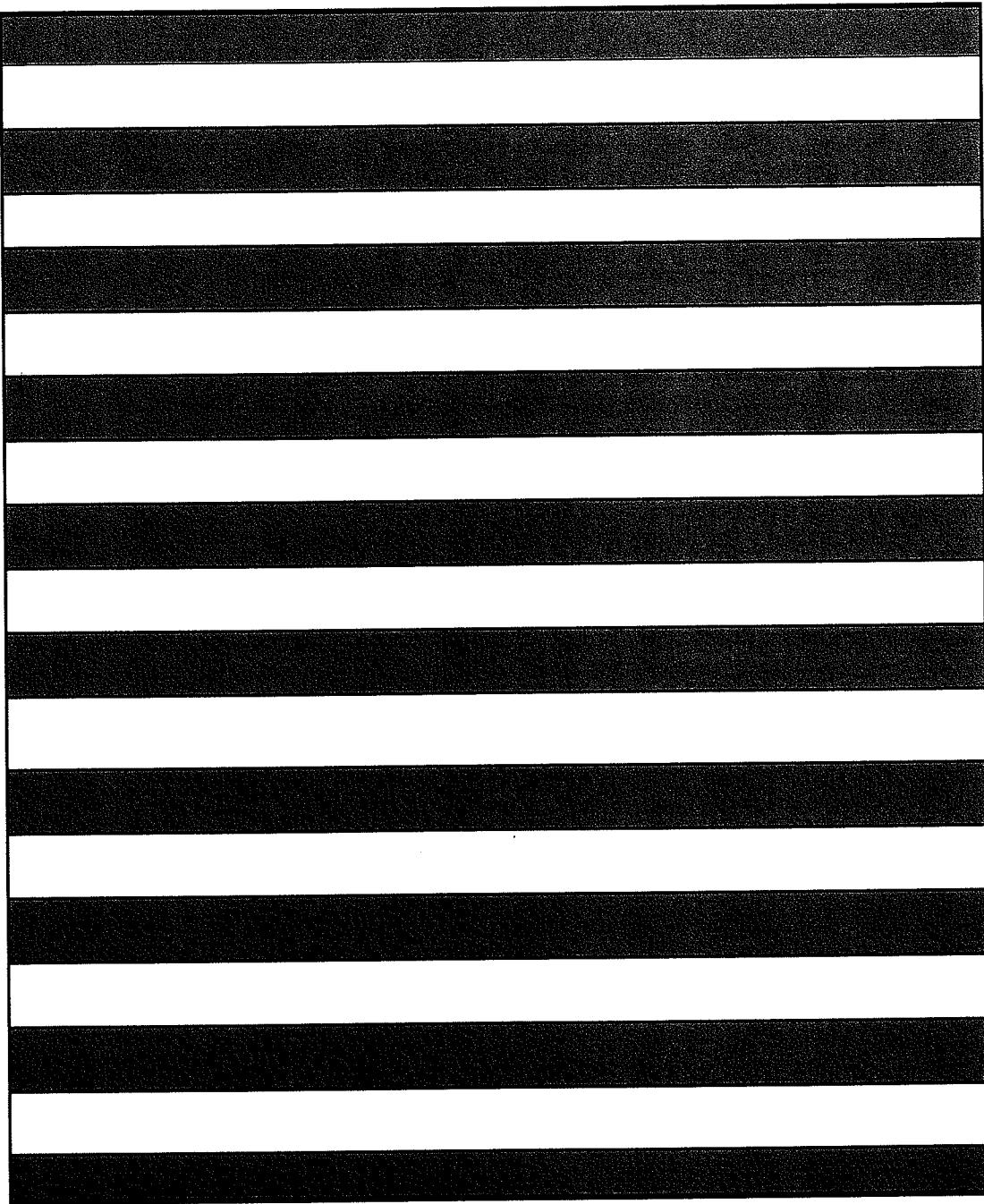
If you leave MDHS custody when you turn 18 years old, you will be able to get financial assistance when you find yourself in a money crisis while you are trying to move toward being self-sufficient. Until your 21st birthday, you can get this money once a quarter when you find yourself in crisis. You can ask for money for things like rent deposits, rent, utility deposits, utility payments, food, household supplies and child care. The money will be paid to the company or person you owe the money to.

You don't have to go back to the County that was responsible for you while you were in MDHS custody. You can get these services from the County you presently live in. The worker who is helping you in your present County has to be able to get written information from the youth/chancery court where you were released from MDHS custody. The State IL Coordinator will have to approve all of your requests for help.

You can also get Medicaid until your 21st birthday if you leave MDHS custody on or after your 18th birthday. Your Medicaid benefit does not depend on how much money you make. Your MDHS Social Worker will have to send written information to the Division of Medicaid telling them when you left foster care. The Division of Medicaid will send you a letter telling you that you have continued health and dental insurance.

You can reach your IL Specialist at 1.800.624.9075 if you need to speak with them while you are in the aftercare program. They will be sending you a survey every 6 months to try and keep up with how you are doing and if you need help, so it is important that you always let them know your address.

GROUP GUIDELINES



RETREAT AND CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES

1. Retreat participants are expected to behave in a mature manner and to comply with all directions given by any staff member.
2. Retreat or conference participants are expected to take part in all scheduled activities.
3. All participants are to wear their name badges throughout the retreat or conference.
4. Cell phones are not allowed.
5. Personal CD players or IPODs must remain in the sleeping quarters.
6. Computers are very valuable and costly, therefore they are not allowed at the retreat or conference unless it is the computer camp.
7. Participants are responsible for bringing all their medications and for making sure you have enough for the entire retreat or conference. All medications must be brought in the prescription bottles with the appropriate dosages clearly marked on the containers. All prescription medicines will be turned in to the designated staff member during registration.
8. Appropriate dress is expected. This means young men are to wear shirts unless in sleeping quarters, pants are to fit without undergarments showing and shoes are to be worn unless in sleeping quarters. Young women are to wear tops, shorts and pants that are modest, pants are to fit without undergarments showing and shoes are to be worn unless in sleeping quarters.
9. Suitable personal hygiene must be maintained during the entire retreat or conference. This means that all participants will take at least one bath/shower a day, deodorant will be used daily and teeth will be brushed on a daily basis.

CONSEQUENCE

Participants who violate any of the above guidelines will be referred to the State Independent Living Coordinator and P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Director or their designees. Consequences could include confiscation of an item, isolation of the youth or being sent home. Skills hours will not be granted for the retreat attended when this occurs.

10. All retreats and conferences are "smoke free". Smoking is not allowed.
11. Participants will not use or possess alcohol or illegal drugs while at a retreat or conference.
12. Aggressive or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes physical and verbal aggression.
13. Participants must show respect to other teens and to staff.
14. No fighting is allowed at retreats or conference.
15. Sex is prohibited while at a retreat.
16. Gang related activities such as hand signs or the wearing of gang significant clothing is prohibited. Retreats and conferences are a Gang-Free Zone.
17. You are entitled to your own personal property; not the personal property of others. Stealing is not allowed at the retreat or conference.
18. You are to stay with the group at all times. The adults who are with you are responsible for your safety. Running away or leaving the area where the retreat is being conducted is prohibited.
19. The retreat and conference is for you and your peers involved in P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Youth or adults outside the program who have not been invited are not allowed at the retreat or conference.
20. Opposite sex peers are not allowed in the same sleeping quarters.

You will sign these guidelines before participating in any retreat or conference.

CONSEQUENCE

Participants who violate any of the Guidelines 10 through 20 will be sent home immediately and will not be allowed to attend Youth Conference during the contract year of the violation. Skills hours will not be granted for the retreat attended.

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YOUR IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

IL SPECIALIST: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

SOCIAL WORKER: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

GUARDIAN AD LITEM: _____

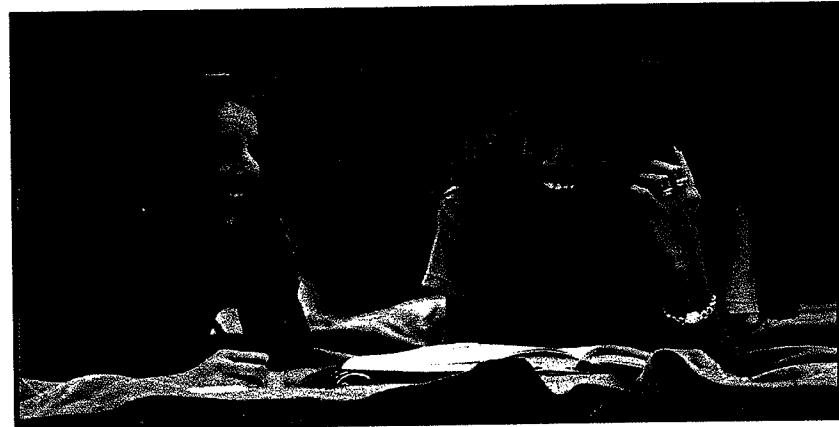
PHONE NUMBER: _____

JUDGE: _____

YOUR COUNTY: _____

COUNTY I'M STAYING IN: _____

MDHS PHONE NUMBER: _____





YOUR GROUP SCHEDULE

MONTH: _____

DATE: _____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

TIME: _____

MONTH: _____

DATE: _____

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GLOSSARY OF WORDS YOU MIGHT NEED TO KNOW

(many of these definitions came from www.fosterclub.com)

A

Adjudication: A hearing to figure out if there has been a crime.

Aging Out: When a youth leaves foster care because they have reached age 18 or have finished high school (whichever comes last) without returning home or being adopted.

B

Biological Parents: The person who gave birth or fathered the child.

C

Case Assessment and Case plan: A plan that the Mississippi Department of Human Services, along with the youth and family, makes and updates every six months. It includes the services provided to the youth and family, and makes clear the expectations and progress made toward reaching the goal of permanent placement of the youth.

Child Protective Case Worker: Works with children, youth and families (sometimes the children and youth are still in their homes) to assess, investigate and provide ongoing social services to families where abuse and neglect of youth has been reported, with the goal

of permanent placement of the youth when they are in out-of-home placement.

COR: County of Responsibility

COS: County of Service

Court Appointed Special Advocate: (also known as CASA) An adult volunteer assigned by the court to study and protect the best interests of a youth in a civil or criminal abuse or neglect case. The CASA and the youth should talk on an ongoing basis. The CASA is your voice in the courtroom.

D

MDHS: The abbreviation for the Mississippi Department of Human Services. The state agency that oversees foster care.

Disposition: This is the decision about where the youth should live (such as in state custody) as well as what the parents, MDHS and the youth must do to change the problems.

E

Emancipation: A process and legal action where a youth is legally declared an adult (by a court) prior to age 18. A youth in foster care who is emancipated is no longer a ward of the court (or in foster care).

F

Foster Care: Care provided to youth when they are removed from their biological family's custody and are placed in state custody. Foster care includes placement with relatives, foster families, group homes, shelters and other placements for children under the age of 21.

Foster Home: A home where a youth may live while in the custody of the State's Child Welfare system.

G

Group Home: A home that cares for about 10 foster youth at one time.

Guardian ad Litem (GAL): An adult volunteer, assigned by the court to study and protect the best interests of a youth in a civil or criminal abuse or neglect case. The GAL and the youth should talk on an ongoing basis. The GAL is your voice in the courtroom.

Guardianship: When an adult is granted parental rights for a youth.

H

HOPE Forum (Help Ourselves Prosper Equally): Is a youth advisory group whose members are part of the IL Program. They meet at least 1 time a quarter.

I

Independent Living Program (ILP): A federally funded program providing services to foster youth age 14 and over to prepare for

adulthood. This program provides classes in life skills, vocational training and equipment needed for job training. Also provides funds for college scholarships, skills training and rent assistance.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A plan intended to improve success for an individual student which may include additional assistance, learning aids, tutoring, revised or classroom settings. Produced by a team of people including teachers, school administrators, counselors, parents or foster parents and sometimes the youth themselves.

Individual Service Plan (ISP): A written document describing long range goals and short range objectives for the provision of service for a foster youth.

J

Judicial Review: A court review that looks at the progress of the parents and the youth in order to decide the safest place for the youth to live. There must be a Judicial Review within 18 months (soon to be 12 months) of the child entering custody and at least every 12 months after that.

K

Kinship or Kinship Care: Those providing 24 hour care for children they are related to by blood. This may also be called relative care.

L

Life Book: Pages or a packet of information prepared with or for a

child regarding his/her social background. It includes pictures and stories about people, events and places which are important to the child's history and life.

N

Notice of Hearings: Everyone involved in the case must be served with a notice telling them when and where there's going to be a hearing. "Parties" includes people like parents, attorneys, GALS and your caseworker.

P

Permanency Planning: The caseworker coordinates services for the youth and family to fix the problems that led to the youth's placement in state custody. The goal is to assure a long-term placement for the youth. This may be going home, staying with relatives, staying in long-term foster care until age 18 or 21 or being placed for adoption.

R

Respite Care: Temporary care for a youth in foster care intended to give either the youth or foster parent (or provider) a break.

Reunification: Services that can bring a family back together by working on the problems that caused the separation of the youth from the family.

S

SAILS Advisory Board (Strategies for Achieving Independent Living Services): A group of people, both adults and youth, who meet every month to help guide the Independent Living Program services.

Stipend: A sum of money given to someone for a specific purpose.

T

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR): If family reunification has been ruled out and adoption is a possibility for the child, the MDHS may petition (request) for termination of parents' rights to the child. If the court terminates parental rights it means the child is free for adoption. It also means that your biological parents have no legal rights pertaining to you anymore.

Therapist/Counselor: A licensed person who provides youth supportive services such as counseling, goal planning and advocacy for youth and families. This person can have any of these official titles: Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Professional Counselor, Psychologist or Psychiatrist.

Y

Youth Court Judge: The Youth Court Judge decides what is best for the youth. The judge issues court orders, reads reports, hears arguments and decides whether the youth should be placed in the custody of the state.

Ex. 17B

"JUST WAIT"/ P.R.E.P.A.R.E. CURRICULUM GUIDE

UNIT I	UNIT II	UNIT III	UNIT IV	UNIT V	UNIT VI	UNIT VII	UNIT VIII
Living Life on Purpose Considering Your Future	Standing Strong Resisting Pressure	Building Character Developing Self-Esteem	Developing Relationships Establishing Boundaries	Establishing Boundaries Developing Relationships	Establishing Boundaries Developing Relationships	Making a Fresh Start Getting on the Right Track	The Big Picture Life is Short Live Well
		CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM
<u>Communication & Social Development</u> ▪ 2.4 ▪ 2.5	<u>Decision Making</u> ▪ 5.2	<u>Decision Making</u> ▪ 5.1	<u>Communication Skills & Social Development</u> ▪ 2.6 ▪ 2.7	<u>Communication</u> ▪ 2.1 ▪ 2.3 ▪ 2.4	<u>Daily Living</u> ▪ 7.1 ▪ 2.1 ▪ 2.2 ▪ 2.3 ▪ 2.4 ▪ 2.5 ▪ 2.6	<u>Communication</u> ▪ 2.6	<u>Community Resources & Transportation</u> ▪ 1.1 ▪ 1.3 ▪ 1.2 ▪ 1.4
<u>Employment</u> ▪ 3.1 ▪ 3.2	<u>Self Care</u> ▪ 8.1 ▪ 8.2 ▪ 8.3 ▪ 8.4	<u>Understanding the Law</u> ▪ 9.1 ▪ 9.2 ▪ 9.3	<u>Employment</u> ▪ 3.3	<u>Community Resources</u> ▪ 1.3	<u>Understanding the Law</u> ▪ 9.1 ▪ 9.2 ▪ 9.3	<u>Employment</u> ▪ 3.1 ▪ 3.4 ▪ 3.5	<u>Employment</u> ▪ 3.1 ▪ 3.4 ▪ 3.5
<u>Money Management</u> ▪ 4.4	<u>Communication Skills</u> ▪ 2.1 ▪ 2.2 (objective D)		<u>Money Management</u> ▪ 4.3	<u>Employment</u> ▪ 3.7	<u>Communication</u> ▪ Love for a Lifetime	<u>Money Management</u> ▪ 4.1	<u>Money Management</u> ▪ 4.2 ▪ 4.7 ▪ 4.4 ▪ 4.8 ▪ 4.5 ▪ 4.9 ▪ 4.6
				<u>Healthy Decisions</u> ▪ Be the right One			<u>Housing</u> ▪ 6.1 ▪ 6.4 ▪ 6.2 ▪ 6.5 ▪ 6.3
							<u>Daily Living Skills</u> ▪ 7.1 ▪ 7.4 ▪ 7.2 ▪ 7.5 ▪ 7.3 ▪ 7.6
RESOURCE MATERIALS							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aspire ▪ Connections: Dating and Emotions Relationships and Marriage ▪ Creative Life Skills Activities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ready, Set, Fly Life Skills Activities for Secondary Students ▪ Social Skills Activities for Secondary Students ▪ Power Through Choices: Sexuality Education for Youth in Foster and Group Care 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making It on Your Own ▪ Learning Life Skills Exploring Careers Workbook ▪ Job Savvy Instruction Guide ▪ The Onward Series, Money 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making Choices ▪ Life Skills for Living in the Real World ▪ How to Survive Teaching Health ▪ Lesson 2: Understanding the Court System ▪ Speaking Out, Being Assertive 	

Ex. 17C

Independent Living Aftercare Services

**PREPARE
PROGRAM**



www.mdhs.state.ms.us

www.scscy.org

1-800-624-9075

What is the Aftercare Program?

The Aftercare program is a program designed to provide services to foster youth who have been released from state custody. Youth who left custody at the age of 18 or older are eligible for all services until their 21st birthday. One of the services may be provided to you until your 23rd birthday. Youth are asked to participate in completing an aftercare survey which provides useful information to assure that services provided by the Independent Living Program are meeting the needs of foster youth.



What services are provided?

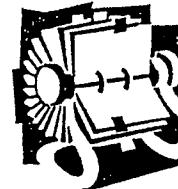
The following services are provided:

Information and Referral Services

Limited Emergency Assistance

Educational Training Voucher Program

Aftercare Survey



Information and Referral Services

Information and referral services are available to youth who are in need of assistance.

A toll free number is provided to enable you to notify the independent living aftercare specialist of your needs. The toll free number is 1-800-624-9075. The aftercare specialist has developed a resource guide for your convenience. In order to obtain this guide, you may contact your local independent living specialist or call your aftercare specialist at the toll free number listed above. You may also contact your local MDHS office when in need of services.

Emergency Assistance

Limited emergency assistance will be provided to youth who have left custody at the age of 18 or older. These services include payments of rent deposits, rent, utility payments, food and household supplies. The youth must show proof of need for the service requested by providing required documentation. Youth are eligible for these services until their 21st birthday. The services are for emergencies.

Educational Training Voucher

Youth must have completed high school or GED. The youth must be enrolled in a post secondary institution or vocational program. Youth have to be under the age of 21 in order to be eligible for the educational training voucher program. The service will be provided to youth until the age 23. This service provides funding for educational needs such as books, tuition, transportation, childcare, housing, etc.



Aftercare Survey

Youth should participate in an exit interview prior to their departure from foster care. The interview will be completed by the youth and the independent living specialist or aftercare specialist. This will allow the aftercare specialist an opportunity to mail you an aftercare survey.

Youth who are released at the age of 18 or older will receive a survey every six months until their 21st birthday. After you complete and return the survey, the aftercare specialist will send you a \$15.00 dollar stipend. The information gathered will be used to structure Independent Living Services to meet the needs of foster youth in the future.



Services Provided by
Southern Christian Services
for Children and Youth, Inc.
860 East River PL, Suite 104
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